

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-11, 14-24 are pending in the present application, claims 3 and 13 having been cancelled herein. The Office Action and cited references have been considered. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The disclosure was objected to due to an informality which has been corrected in this amendment. Withdrawal of the objection is thus respectfully requested.

Applicant notes with appreciation the indication that claims 3-8, 13-19 and 22-23 contain allowable subject matter. To advance prosecution, applicant has amended claims 1 and 11 to include the recitations of claims 3 and 13 respectively. This renders the rejection of claims 1, 9-11, 20-21 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) moot. Withdrawal thereof is respectfully requested.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections of record. Applicant submits that the application is in condition for allowance, and early notice to this effect is most earnestly solicited.

Appln. No. 09/988,816  
Amdt. dated March 30, 2004  
Reply to Office Action of January 2, 2004

If the Examiner has any questions, he is invited to contact the undersigned at (202) 628-5197.

Respectfully submitted  
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